

The Mystery of I.E. & C. Co. Japan Hand-Painted Porcelain

by John G. Henley



Above: I was simply amazed by the quality of this I.E. & C. Co. Japan Hand Painted (IE&C) vase.

On the 14th of February, 2006 I somewhat reluctantly ventured outside the domain of the standard Nippon collector with the acquisition of the pictured Japanese vase. I will not go into a great descriptive as the pictures speak for themselves. This is a wonderful example of a moriage style Nippon era vase. It is a significant Art Nouveau piece measuring 11 7/8" (30 cm) high and 5" (12.6 cm) wide at the handles and includes a wrap around forest scene on 4 panels.



Left: Note the vivid colours and detailed brushwork that is balanced by the abundant and concise moriage that practically covers the vase.



Right: The gilding on this piece is almost mint. The vase has the green Hand Painted Mark.

Prior to this purchase, however, I had researched the mark without much success. I found references and examples of the output of this firm but could not find any definitive information either on the porcelain, the vintage or the maker. I hope to, at least partially, fill that void as this article is aimed at providing a pictorial appreciation of the quality and range of the product, expert opinion on the vintage and factual information on the makers and the mark. There is a lot of information presented that should allow the reader to come to his or her own conclusions about the attributes of this body of porcelain as a collectible from the Nippon era. Pictured on the right is the standard 1.7 cm green IE&C mark.



THE JAPANESE PORCELAIN INDUSTRY

In the last half of the 19th Century, the Japanese porcelain industry underwent a major industrial revolution that allowed it to enter and then compete in the global market. The emphasis of production of the cottage based industry in the Seto/Nagoya area had been on day-to-day household implements. The Japanese had neither the desire nor the financial freedom to purchase non-essentials. *“The Meiji (1868-1912) government vigorously encouraged the export of raw pottery products which could be manufactured with domestic materials. The energetic execution of this policy made it imperative that the pottery be fully able to meet the demands of the foreign markets.”* **“The Industrial Revolution in Pottery in Japan – Seto and Nagoya.” Yasuo Mishima. Kyoto University Economic Review, Vol. XXV No.2, Oct 1955. (pg 32).**

*“Around 1890, Seto industrialists were able to produce semi-finished articles of the various shapes of a ‘fancy’ line for export”. This accounted for 90 percent of output, which, before being exported, had to be painted, glazed and re-fired. Thus, these goods were sent en masse to Nagoya, where these articles were finished by exclusively contracted specialized artisans who were managed by the wholesalers themselves, **ibid (pg 34)**, such as, the Morimura-gumi, Taki-fuji Company and other wholesalers with whom the Seto industrialists had special contracts. “Most, however, found their way to the Morimura Manufakturen, where painting, glazing and firing was done. The products, thus finished, were mostly exported to America. It is seen, thus, that the production of the Morimura-gumi, who had concentrated by moving from Tokyo and Kyoto, was already in 1900 the greatest of all the wholesale capitalists.” **Ibid (pg 43)***

This capability came none too soon as *“the descent of the popularity of Japanese decorative arts was noted at the World Exposition in Chicago in 1893 when many items went unsold. It was then that the producers became aware of a need for modernization in areas such as designs, mechanization, industrialization and so on.”* *“The European products, especially, had decorative fancy wares with beautiful western roses, plants and scenic views drawn on them and the Americans were buying all these items..”* **“About Old Noritake” Keishe Suzuki: “Masterpieces of Old Noritake” Edited by Yumiko Oga and Tsuneko Wakabayashi. Translated by Aki Oga Kato and Judith Boyd. Heibonsha, April 2001. pgs 137-141.**

Japan had begun preparing very early for 1900 and in 1896 decisions were made concerning the selection of items for exhibit. On the artistic side *“items that could give full play, in design and technique, to the principle of pure aesthetics”* became the official government direction. *“This laid the foundation for self expression of fine art, based on the concepts of modern western art.”* *“After the World Exposition in Paris (1900), Art Nouveau became the strongest influence in the world of style”* and production of Art Nouveau objects were energetically pursued, especially in Tokyo and Kyoto. Art Nouveau was embraced by the Japanese production infrastructure in all aspects of design. ***“Old Noritake and Japanese Modern Decorative Arts” Kenji Kaneko: “Masterpieces of Old Noritake” Edited by Yumiko Oga and Tsuneko Wakabayashi. Translated by Aki Oga Kato and Judith Boyd. Heibonsha, April 2001. pgs 142-146.***

However, at the time *“Germany posed as a most formidable rival to tackle but, due to a lack of uniformity both in size and shape, Japanese products could not compare to German, English and French products.”* **Industrial Revolution (pg 44)** The semi-modernized wholesalers Manufakturen system still in force in the Nagoya area, the principal producing area of export pottery in Japan, while partly successful in mass production, proved no match for the streamlined operation in foreign modern mechanized factories.

“The contemporary American market demanded porcelain table wares with fringe patterns painted on a pure-white base, instead of a greyish base. Conscious of this, the Morimura-gumi established the Nihon Toki Gomei Kaisha (Nippon Pottery Unlimited Partnership) in January, 1904 and proceeded to import a complete set of the most modern machines for the production of porcelain including two or three stage furnaces and glazing coal furnaces from Germany.” In 1909 the Noritake factory employed approximately 530 people in a *“big modern manufacturing plant”*. In 1908, the Chigusa Pottery Factory was established, followed by the Teikoku Pottery Factory (later named the Nagoya Pottery Factory) in 1911 and, in 1916, the Shirakawa Pottery Factory began operations. *“By 1912, Japan was enabled to export to America pure-white base porcelain articles in place of the old greyish ones. Thus, the brittleness and lack of uniformity of the pottery which had been produced by Nagoya wholesalers were overcome.”* **Ibid (pg 48)**

However, in the 1920's Art Deco and American Industrial design was the wave of the future lead by *“a new generation of designers and design divisions of companies. New groups of professional designers like “Shichininsha” (meaning 7 people company) and “Shougyou bijutsuka kyokai” (meaning designers association) appeared.”* *“The American Art Deco style was a product made to fit the daily demands of the foreign market.”* **Old Noritake (pgs 142-146)** *“At Morimura Brothers in the US and at Noritake in Japan, as soon as this style of decoration became a sensation, they decided at once to use this style for their products.”* ***“About Old Noritake” Keishe Suzuki: “Masterpieces of Old Noritake” Edited by Yumiko Oga and Tsuneko Wakabayashi. Translated by Aki Oga Kato and Judith Boyd. Heibonsha, April 2001. pgs 137-141.***

Somewhat surprisingly, I believe IEC & Co. did not embrace the Art Deco phenomenon.

DESIGN AND TECHNIQUES

“Art Nouveau draws its designs from the romanticism of the 1870’s and adroitly adopts the balanced shape of the intricate curve and roundness. Various sized flower vases, ewers, ferners, pitchers and other ornamental wares have been designed with curves and swells that just suit their height and size. The shape of the knob, the handle and the finials on the lids of these items are also molded with extremely well balanced curves and Art Nouveau shapes.” Ibid (pgs. 137-141)

Some of the more significant techniques used by Noritake, and others, in decorating Art Nouveau designs are as follow:

1. **Moriage** – a technique used to make ceramics three-dimensional, including convex raised, icchin raised, brush raised, Wedgwood (techniques of Jasperware) and so on and usually combined with other techniques. The characteristic moriage is extremely elaborate and delicate and may be combined with gold, coloured paint or jewels that created a colourful, artistic decoration.
2. **Ichin Moriage** – Ichin is the name of the tool used to draw moriage. White or coloured mud clay paint (made with water and clay) is put in the icchin and then squeezed out the beak to create decorative lines, faces and dots, much like the process of decorating a cake.
3. **Gold Raised Work** – After the first firing of a painted piece, the icchin is used to draw dots, dotted lines or pictures with the mud clay. It is fired again and the moriage is covered by painting it with liquid gold giving a raised gold look.
4. **Gold Beading, Aqua Beading** – After the first firing, moriage is used to decorate in small dots and must be done carefully and precisely. Gold beading is just gold painted on top of the beads. Water colour beading is called “aqua beading” because it looks like bubbles of water.
5. **Raised Enamel (Jewels)** – is a technique used to enhance a gold finish whereby drops of shining enamel are put on top of a gold colour or gold overlay to make it even more luxurious. A mixture of enamels and chemicals is dissolved and applied with a hypodermic-like tool resulting in a jeweled effect. *“Techniques and Glossary for Old Noritake” Tsuneko Wakabayashi: “Masterpieces of Old Noritake” Edited by Yumiko Oga and Tsuneko Wakabayashi. Translated by Aki Oga Kato and Judith Boyd. Heibonsha, April 2001. pgs 163-167”.*
6. **Wedgwood** – refers to Nippon pieces which attempt to imitate Josiah Wedgwood’s Jasperware generally produced with a slip trailing décor, rather than the sprigging or- namentation techniques used on Jasperware. White clay slip was trailed onto the background colour of the item by use of the icchin, spatula and brushes. *“Van Patten’s ABC’s of Collecting Nippon Porcelain. Joan Van Patten, Collector Books, Kentucky, USA, 2005. pg. 314”.*
7. **Sprig Mold** - A one-piece mold used in making ornamentation. Clay is fitted or poured into a mold which is incised with a design. Only one side is molded and the exposed side becomes the back of the finished item. **Ibid. (pg 314)**

Art Deco design has been influenced by such concepts as European Cubism, Russian Constructivism, German Bauhaus, Italian Futurism (abstraction, contortion, simplification) and adaptations of designs from ancient Egypt, Africa and the Orient. Noritake products are “colourful, bold, powerful, innovative, unconventional and exotic”. Pieces “were not meant to be dinnerware, but decorative, and so, they were elaborately designed – bold and unconventional, unique fancy wares.” *“About Old Noritake” Keishe Suzuki (pgs. 137-141)*

VINTAGE AND MARKS

INTRODUCTION TO THE MARKS—Geisha Pattern Cup and Saucer

This is an incomplete diapered Geisha pattern consisting of 4 cups and 2 saucers. The cups measure 2 ¼” (5.6 cm) diameter and 2 1/8” (5.3 cm) high. The saucers are 4 3/8” (11.2 cm) in diameter. It is also noteworthy that in 6 pieces, 4 have the green mark (1.5 cm version), 1 is marked with only the IE & C wreath and 1 is unmarked. The fluting and raised décor was achieved by the use of either drain or solid casting molds used extensively in the Meiji era.



I.E. & C. Co. JAPAN WREATH MARKS



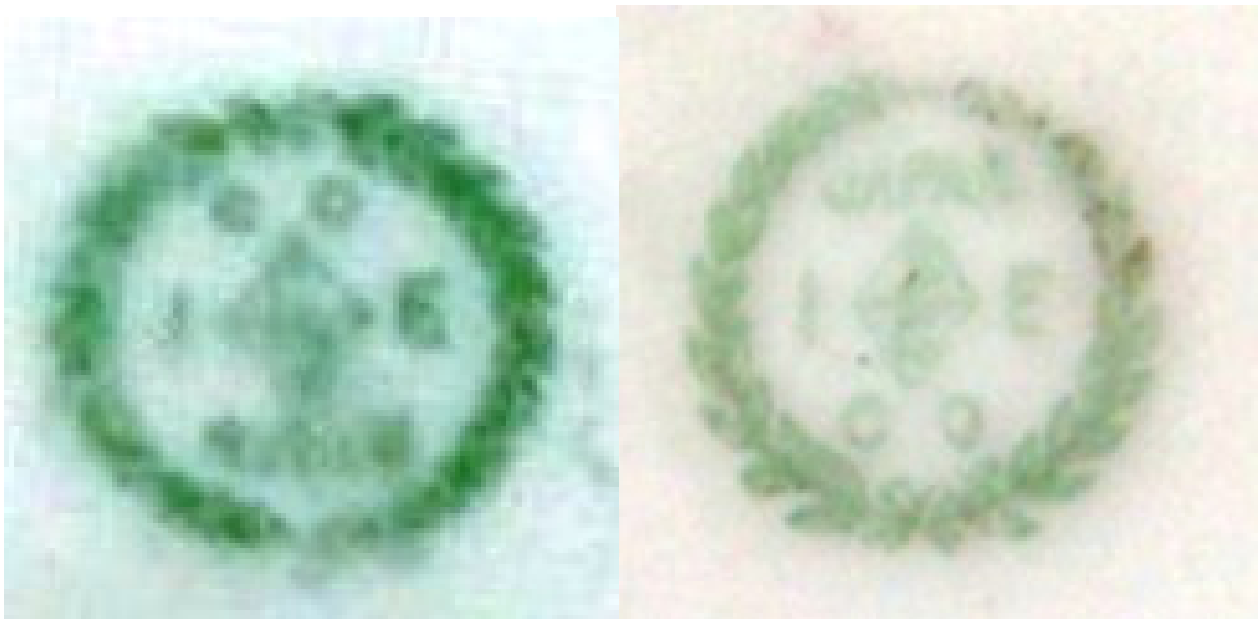
The significance of the variations go beyond the inclusive or absence of Hand Painted to the style of the wreath leading one to believe that a chronology is evidenced.

HYPOTHESES

Given this level of general information concerning the development of and adaptations of the Japanese porcelain industry in the latter part of the 19th century and the early 20th century, I suggest the following:

1. Porcelain bearing the IE&C mark spans a period of time inclusive of what Nippon collectors like to refer to as pre-Nippon, Nippon and post-Nippon. To be more specific, a timeline of approximately 40 years from 1885 to 1925.
2. IE & C items tend to be Art Nouveau but non-typical when compared to the majority of Nippon era export items destined for North America.
3. Japan, as country of origin, was originally used and maintained by the firm because the product was not intended for the American market.

To the first proposition, a bit of “Antiques Roadshow” type of collaboration. Approximately a year ago a pair of IE & C vases were offered on eBay AU by an elderly lady in South Australia. The seller advised that the vases were originally purchased in England and brought out to Australia in 1901 and had been in the family ever since. It was and is not uncommon for family heirlooms, such as porcelain, to arrive in Australia with immigrant families. The vases were marked with an IE&C wreath that did not include Hand Painted and the Co. was at the top (right below). Source: Karry-leanne Fisher, patron of the Australian Noritake Collectors Guild and author of Noritake for Australia and New Zealand. Fisher is of the opinion that this mark is the oldest of the marks used by IE&C. The marks below have been provided by Debbie Crisp www.debscornucopia.com of Queensland. The mark on the left was on a cup and the mark on the right was on the matching saucer. A supplement to this paper is attached that goes into greater detail on the marking scenarios.



Fisher also provided me with the photos on the right of two vases with mirror image but identical motifs, however, the porcelain vase is marked IE &C (10.5 cm high) and the rimmed vase is marked Hand-painted Oriental (11 cm high) and the silver is hallmarked WH&S London 1915. KL obtained them from an AU family that had originally brought them from the UK. The quality of the porcelain and the glazing is mediocre, at best, and the IE&C vase, in particular, shows impurities on the unglazed base.



She also referred me to an eBay UK listing and I contacted the seller at Clan MacRae Antiques and was given permission to use their listing of “a pair of oriental hand-painted vases with hallmarked silver tops.” “They are marked ORIENTAL HAND-PAINTED. These rare items are 11cm X 6.5cm and have no damages.” They are made by the same firm, William Hutton and Sons, in their Birmingham factory 1902.



In 2006 in Brisbane, I had examined an unmarked rimmed vase identical to the three WH&S vases above but did not purchase it. In early 2007 I purchased the small scalloped edge pin dish, on the left, at an Antique Fair near Ipswich and had every intention to go back for its mate. The dish is approximately 4 1/2” (11.4 cm), rather striking but has a very thin, rough glaze. An opportunity lost.

Generally, the porcelain in IEC wares is good but inferior to the porcelain produced later by Morimura Bros. The porcelain on the Geisha cup and saucer, illustrated above, has a faint gray-blue cast or tone and there are obvious impurities in the clay, but this was quite typical for the wares of the “*early period works*” spanning the years 1885-1905. “***Old Noritake*”, Kazuhiko Kimura, *The INCC Journal*, April 2008, (pg 11).** Within the industry, “*this was probably unavoidable given the low level of clay development technology in Japan at the time. On the other hand, though the underneath may not have been so good, when it came to the painting, many of the pieces from this time were decorated extremely painstakingly, with elaborate, exquisite skill and refinement*”. **Ibid (pg 12)** The requirement for this degree of refinement was consistent with the United Kingdom and Continental preferences of the late 1800s but inconsistent with mass production capability of the industry. While the use of moriage, molding, raised gold and other gilding, on many of the IE&C pieces is extensive; it is also noteworthy that I have yet to see a piece of IE&C that one would describe as Art Deco. This observation becomes all the more salient when, “It is said that the sales of Art Deco era porcelain were the largest in the world.” “***Techniques and Glossary for Old Noritake*” Tsuneko Wakabayashi (pgs 163-167)**”.

To the second proposition, the items presented in the Gallery speak of either a unique presentation, as in the cases of the blue chocolate pot, the tall landscape two-handled vase and the blue nautical vase with white birds or, in the case of the greenish chocolate pot, a “Dresden” shape, indicative of the very early Nippon era. In addition, the Geisha cups had the handles affixed after the body of the cup was molded, also indicative of the same timeframe.

To the third point, I believed for some time that IE&C items were primarily Nippon era, circa 1915, destined for non-United States markets. With advances in the Japanese porcelain industry and the demand from North America, literally hundreds of manufacturers proceeded with the registration of their Nippon marks in the first ten years of the 20th century. I suggest that IE & C Co. choose not to “*change from Japan to Nippon*”. **Kimura, (pg 12)**. I now have reason to believe the company produced porcelain **both** prior to and through the requirements of The McKinley Act. In other words, the non-US market focus of the company did not change but the production timeline was longer than originally believed.

In terms of expert validation, based upon actual pieces of porcelain, the following is offered:

In her book, “***Japanese Porcelain 1800-1950*”, Nancy Schiffer, (pg 278)**, pictures a “*Group of Nagoya vessels, back left, vase with green mark reading ‘Japan I. E.C. & Co.’ in a wreath and Hand Painted, 1925 and after, 6 inches high ...*”.

On Saturday, August 13th, 2005, “**The Fred Tenney Nippon Porcelain Collection**” was auctioned by **Jackson’s International Auctioneers and Appraisers of Fine Art and Antiques, Cedar Falls, Iowa, USA**. The preamble of the catalogue, **(pg 2)**, states “*In the world of advanced collectors of Hand Painted Nippon Porcelain there are few, if any, who do not know of Fred Tenney and his spectacular collection*”. The publication goes on to advise that Mr. Tenney was instrumental in the establishment of the International Nippon Collectors Club and served as president on several occasions.

The auction included two items of particular interest:

“Lot 203. A Japanese (Nippon) moriage decorated porcelain handled vase, early 20th century with moriage decoration of geese in flight against a hand-painted cloudy sky below a shoulder decorated with raised gilt scrolling. Green “I&E Japan in Wreath” mark. Height 14 inches. Tight hairline in handle.” (Pg 40)

“Lot 328. A Nippon Boy Stealing Goose decorated porcelain humidor, circa 1915 with hand painted cartoon style decoration. Green “I&E Japan” mark. Diameter 6 inches.”. (Pg 61)

These three references are important as they provide expert opinion on vintage and illustrate changes in output and style ranging from, I suggest, the very early 20th century to, at least, the mid 1920's. This opinion will be further supported pictorially and, in the case of the Boy Stealing Goose pattern, by a rather extensive examination of the marking process.

Boy Stealing Goose Pattern

In addition to the Tenney humidor, ***“Collectors Encyclopedia of Nippon Porcelain Sixth Series”, Joan Van Patten, pg 241, plate 4228*** and ***“ABC's of Collecting Nippon Porcelain”, Joan Van Patten, Dutch Scene, pg 197***, illustrates a small dish, 7” wide bearing mark 104 “Studio Hand Painted Nippon” in green. Illustrated below are two versions of this pattern with two variations. The first is minor in that the Tenney humidor depicted three geese in pursuit, the VP dish contained two and my illustrations, taken in New Zealand, show only one goose. This type of variation is very common and merely reflects the amount of space the artisan had at his/her disposal. The other point of difference is in the mark where the humidor had the standard make, the VP dish specified SHP Nippon and in my examples the wreath stands alone above the inscription Studio Hand Painted. The points to be made are that the vintage of the maker and pattern is confirmed as Nippon era. It is my opinion that this particular pattern became so popular that IE&C blanks were used in the guild/art studio industries in many countries. More will follow on this subject.



I.E. & C. Co. JAPAN STUDIO HAND PAINTED WREATH MARKS



MANUFACTURED IN JAPAN; HAND PAINTED ELSEWHERE

“China painting in the United States was very popular during the late 1800s and into the early 1900s. Many companies advertised china painting kits and blank pieces of porcelain for sale. ... Decorating studios all over the country also had their artists paint these blanks.” “Collectors Encyclopedia of Nippon Porcelain, Sixth Series”, Joan Van Patten, (pg 97). The earliest of the Noritake Nippon marks cited was registered in Japan in 1911. Joan concludes that the decoration on such items is not typical of Japanese painted wares. *“The Wonderful World of Nippon Porcelain 1891-1921”, Mary Wojciechowski, (pg 27),* adds that china painting really came into vogue for ladies between 1880 and 1915 with the development of small craft guilds and art studios in both the United States and United Kingdom. She further advises that much of the early importation of blanks was from European firms.

These facts are consistent with the practice of Morimura Gumi. On the one hand, starting in approximately 1882, Morimura Gumi contracted to purchase porcelain bodies for export from several potteries in the Seto district of Japan, with Harumitsu Katob Pottery being the largest supplier. However, this grayish porcelain could not compete in the United States market. *“Noritake History of the Materials Development and Chronology of the Backstamps”, Noritake Co. Ltd., May 1997”, (pg 2).* Even the importation of finer quality white clay from France did little to improve the quality of the porcelain produced locally until about 1912 when Noritake could finally take on full scale production on its own. *“Old Noritake, Kazuhiko Kimura, The INCC Journal, April, 2008.” (pg 12)*

In North America, the Pickard China Company imported extensively from Europe but also from Noritake. The Spicer Studios, which operated from 1885 until 1910, was another well-known importer of European blanks. Royal Dragon Nippon Studio and V Nippon, on the other hand, were sole sourcing their porcelain blanks. *“The Wonderful World of Nippon Porcelain 1891-1921”, (pg 27).* Van Patten has identified a dinnerware set displaying three marks: Noritake M-in-Wreath (red) 1918, KPM Silesia and Thomas/Bavaria. *“Collectors Encyclopedia of Nippon Porcelain, Sixth Series..” (pg 97)*

Thus, the emergence of china painting guilds and art studios, at least in North America and United Kingdom, created demand for porcelain blanks and this market niche was largely filled by Japanese and European factories. While it is possible that a similar structure and demand in other countries, such as New Zealand, where an abundance of IEC pieces, both Hand Painted and Studio Hand Painted, can still be found, current research has not identified any such cottage industry. However, is it entirely conceivable that such a demand and industry existed in the South Pacific drawing upon the excess capacity of Seto for an almost endless supply of cheap goods. “Setomono”, the Japanese industry name for these goods, “*would find its way mainly into the Asiatic and South Seas areas and the domestic Japanese market*”. ***“The Industrial Revolution in Pottery in Japan – Seto and Nagoya.” Yasuo Mishima. Kyoto University Economic Review, Vol. XXV No.2, Oct 1955. (pg 49).*** However, the role of the guilds and art studios and the place of the porcelain so produced in our collections is a story for another day.

IE & C Co. Gallery



Left: This square four-handled vase measures 8 1/4" (21 cm) tall and 5 7/8" (15 cm) across the vase. Each panel is approximately 4 5/8" (12 cm). It features a Wedgwood style motif using technique 3 (Gold Raised Work) as a core element. The four scenic panels wrap-around the vase with the stream on the front two panels. One could image the scene as representative of the Australian Outback, i.e., the Dry Sunburned Land. It bears the standard green mark.

Below: Whereas Wedgwood used the sprigging technique to apply molded designs to porcelain bodies, technique 2 (Icchin Moriage) is used to create this effect; much like decorating a cake.





Above left: This cobalt vase has three scenic panels with two being violets. It measures 6 1/8" (15.5 cm) high by 4" (10.2 cm) across. The gilding is extensive and the beading minute. The swans are in white moriage. Standard marks on both.

Above right: The chocolate pot is an unusual blue motif with heavy gilding, beading and moriage accents on the flowers. The pot measures 11 1/2" (29 cm) high by approx. 6 1/2" (16.5 cm) at the handle.



Both of these pieces have the green mark and share a similar floral treatment. In addition, the finely detailed gold raised work and beading is similar. However, the vase also has extensive Gold/Aqua beading, technique 4, on all the gilded components. With the exception of gold loose at the top and bottom edges of the vase and on some of the exposed edges of the spout/top of the chocolate pot, these pieces are in excellent condition.



This ewer is classic roses and cobalt Art Nouveau. It measures 8 7/8" (22.7 cm) high by 4 1/2" (12 cm) at its widest point. Again, there are multiple decorating techniques used in combination, i.e., gold raised work, gilding, etc. In addition, the white gilded roses appear to be a very shiny enamel, after the fashion of Jewelling, technique 5. This application met with limited success as, in this piece, adhesion, especially to the cobalt covered areas was rather poor. The glaze has a bluish tint and the bottom is unglazed exposing a coarse aspen porcelain. The mark on this New Zealand purchase is the miniature 1.3 cm. green version.



This vase also has an unusual and brilliant mate blue finish highly accented with white moriage and brilliant gilding. The moriage and painting is completely free hand as evidenced by the lack of uniformity. The vase is 10 3/8" (26.4 cm) high and 6 1/4" (16 cm) wide. With the exception of a very minor loss of moriage at the bottom and minor gild loss at the very top of the handles, the vase is in excellent condition. Standard green mark.



This unusually shaped vase is 10 1/4" (26 cm) high, 8 1/4" (21 cm) wide and 4" (10 cm) thick. With the exception of a few short breaks in the moriage strings, mostly on the bottom of the vase, it is in very good condition. The use of blue and black moriage to provide accents between the nautical panels is striking. I included the definition of sprig mold as a technique because I believe that the birds and possibly the large flowers are an application of sprigging. This vase was purchased in New Zealand. Standard green mark.

Below: nautical scene on back of vase.



This vase measures 12 3/8" (31.5 cm) to the top of the handles. It is also 7" (17.8 cm) across the handles. There is nothing standard about this vase except for the classic Art Nouveau curves. The beading and gilding is extensive and very detailed. It bears the blue IEC mark pictured in the book. The only blemish is the break and repair to the right handle. Blue 2 cm. mark.

The cottage scene, most likely of a cedar forest, is outstanding all the way around the vase as there is no "blank" spaces. If one looks closely at the insert you can detect the texture of the paint on the shoreline, in the trees and on the cabin. The yellowish highlights in the foliage is also achieved with this technique.





This classical Art Nouveau shape was widely used by many Nippon era factories. The vase measures 7 3/4" (19.5 cm) high by 5 1/8" (13 cm) across the handles. It has some unique features: it is white porcelain not ashen, the primary accent colour is forest green, not cobalt and the handles each have a factory hole just above the joint to the side to let gasses escape during the firing process indicating that they were molded with the vase and suggesting mid-Nippon era. Green 1.3 cm mark.



This chocolate pot style, often referred to as Dresden, was used by many companies during the early Nippon era and has been found with the Morimura Bros. Maple Leaf and RC Nippon marks. It measures 10" (25.4 cm) high and 6 1/2" (16.5 cm) wide at the handle. It is in excellent condition with minimal gilding loss. It has two styles of flowers; one gilded and one of white enamel moriage and gilding. Standard green mark.



Above: This pair of vases carry the green mark. They are 8" (20.2 cm) high by 5 1/8" (13 cm) at the handles. The vase is a familiar Nippon era shape but the handles are more elaborate than the norm. The gilding and beading on the main parts of the vases is excellent but the tops of the vases show some ware. The poppies have been repaired as the white and orange enamel highlights at the edge of the petals had decomposed. This problem seems to be similar to the issue with the floral ewer noted previously. Standard green mark.



This is a front and back presentation of the cup and saucer set presented in the marks introduction. To date, this is my only purchase from a US source. 1.5 cm standard mark plus 1 cm green wreath.



It took me a long time to find a three-piece tea set and it happened to be a very early Dresden style set. It is the characteristic ash gray porcelain in a six sided, scallop motif with extensive scrolling and gold raised work and includes molded floral accents at the top and bottom of each item.



The tea pot measures 5" (12.5 cm) high by 7 1/8" (18 cm) from spout to handle. There is minor gold loss on the spout and handle but overall condition is excellent.

The sugar measures 4 1/8" (10.5 cm) and is also in very good condition with only minor gold loss. The lid has a factory blemish/impurity in the porcelain.

The creamer measures 3 3/16" (8 cm) high and 4 7/16" (11.3 cm) at its widest point. It is in excellent condition.



This vase was my last AU purchase to date. It measures 10 1/2" (27 cm) high and approximately 5 1/2" (14 cm) wide at the handles. Although Art Nouveau, the décor is more traditional Japanese. This vase is marked with the standard green IEC Hand Painted mark.

Concluding Remarks

By 1879, there was a general understanding that *“there was more demand for exported porcelain decorated with gold brocade and colourful pictures, than for blue-and-white porcelain.”* Concurrently, a man named Noritatsu, took over the painting factory set up specifically for the Vienna Exposition and created Hyouchien where *“the study of the technique of producing pictures on ceramics that resembled paintings”* commenced. *“It was the introduction of western paint that made these realistic expressions possible. By this method, the colours came out stable, clear and bright and because it was possible to use many colours, a lot of artistic, colourful products were produced.”* *“Masterpieces of Old Noritake -- Pre-Old Noritake History – Exported Ceramics in Meiji era”*, Fumitaka Hattori. (pgs 147-151)

In 1880 the first two painting factories were established in the Nagoya area, followed in 1883 by Manjiro Takifuji building an entire painting factory to take advantage of the heavy overseas trading. *“He also made an effort to train artists to paint on porcelain, thereby, opening a base in Nagoya for these artists.”* After this, many painting factories were built, one after another, mainly because it was convenient to Seto and Mino. As the new exporting trading companies were formed, *“Nagoya became the center of the Japanese ceramic exports”*. **Ibid. (pgs 147-151)**

It should also be pointed out, *“The pictures made with gold overlay that was the big trend of the time, (1889-90) was produced by using the icchin created by Magobei Ohkura.”* It is generally agreed that, the technique of moriage is the most well known characteristic of the Old Noritake (period) Nippon porcelains. *“Masterpieces of Old Noritake -- Old Noritake and Magobei Ohkura of Morimura-gumi”*, Yukio Sunagawa (Editor). (pgs 152-157)

The porcelain produced by IE&C has been shown to be indicative of what Kimura refers to as *“early period works (1885/1905) characterized by an ashen colour of not particularly good quality but decorated extremely painstakingly, with elaborate, exquisite skill and refinement.”* *“The INCC Journal, Old Noritake, April 2008”*. (pg 12) In addition, by the use of silver hallmarks, I have firmly established output from 1902 to 1915 and these dates are consistent with the expert opinions on the Tenney collection. In addition, Schiffer attributes an IE&C Nagoya vase to 1925. It is entirely possible that the discussion on studio and craft guilds would lead one to conclude that the SHP items also anchor an earlier rather than later timeline. Accordingly, I suggest the timeline has been convincingly established.

As for the lack of Art Deco, I believe this conclusion is not a product of my particular appreciation for the porcelain, i.e., a purchasing preference, but a reflection of the possibility that IE&C either choose to ignore the demand for Art Deco or went out of production with the dwindling demand and/or the cost prohibitive production nature of Art Nouveau porcelains. The items presented by IE&C are all heavily influenced by the Art Nouveau style of decoration. By 1920, Nippon Toki, for example, had largely moved away from the inclusion of Art Nouveau design elements, such as moriage and extensive gilding, on their fancy wares as they phased into Art Deco and its unique decorating techniques and styles.

The vase attributed to “1925 and after” by Schiffer is indicative, I suggest, of Noritake output between the adoption of the Noritake marking system in 1918 and the very early 1920’s prior to the Art Deco revolution. Moreover, it illustrates that the IE&C styles were anything but copies of the designs and styles developed by Nippon Toki artists for export to the United States.

As of this writing, Kazhiko Kimura is in the final stages of publication of a new and definitive book on the marks used by Japanese porcelain producers. While the IE&C mark is included in the book, unfortunately, it appears in the “unidentified” section. Without any information coming forth on the identity of IE&C Co. Japan, I can only guess that the company made strategic decisions to market to Sterling based economies thereby avoiding direct competition with the Morimura Brothers juggernaut. It goes without saying that they were cognizant of consumer demands, as evidenced by the range of products and the technical and artistic quality of the end product.

The majority of the porcelain pictured was obtained while I lived in Australia. I purchased two vases and gathered the pictures and backmarks on the Boy Stealing Goose items while on vacation in New Zealand. To date, I have made one North American purchase although I have seen, on eBay and in antique fairs and markets, the odd vase or plaque. In addition, I have had the good fortune to get in touch with Clan MacRae Antiques in the UK. But much of the inspiration and some vital information for this article comes from two colleagues Karry-leanne Fisher and Louette McInnes. Karry, a recognized expert on Noritake, is an accomplished researcher and blood-hound when it comes to gathering information. Louette is a wealth of information on the collection scene in New Zealand, especially when it comes to IE&C porcelain.

“It is interesting to note that none of the export wares were appreciated or valued by the Japanese, as it was tailor-made for Western taste and quite alien to their own taste.” “Oriental Antiques In Color, Michael Ridley, Arco Publishing company, Inc., New York, 1977.” (pg 21)

A general observation would have to be, “My, how times have changed!” Nonetheless, I trust that this article will stimulate more people to take an interest in IE&C, in particular, and porcelain, in general, as an object of art and a picture of our collective past. If this occurs, more discoveries, information and/or opinions will come forward.

I hope that others will share their findings and treasures so that we may all be better off for the experience.

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